

# Motor Vehicle Crashes

...for children under 14 years old

## Why does it matter?

- In 2003, unintentional injuries were the leading cause of deaths for state residents between the ages of 1 - 39.

(SD Department of Health)

- Every 14 seconds someone in America is injured in a traffic crash and every 12 minutes someone is killed. (NHTSA)

- In South Dakota, a reported crash occurs every 29 minutes, one person is injured every 75 minutes, and a death occurs every 43 hours.

(SD Motor Vehicle Traffic Accident Summary)

**In South Dakota...**

**Did You Know?**

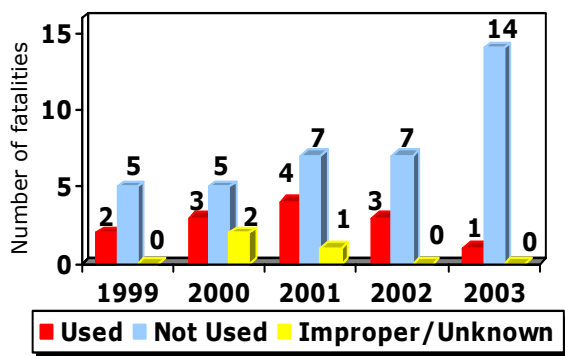
## Need More Information?

- Riding unrestrained is the greatest risk factor for death and injury. Approximately 14 percent of children ages 14 and under ride unrestrained, placing them at twice the risk of death and injury of those riding restrained. (Safe Kids Campaign - SKC)

✦ The Healthy People 2010 goal is to reduce the motor vehicle crash death rate to no more than 4.2 per 100,000 for children aged 0-14 years old (Healthy People 2010 Objective), which is much lower than the South Dakota rate of 10.1 per 100,000 (1999-2003 SD Resident Deaths - SD Department of Health).

## Need more details?

**SD Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities -  
Age 0-14 Safety Restraint Usage**



- During 1999-2003, 54 children ages 0-14 were killed in traffic crashes. Only 13 out of 55 of these children were restrained.

Source: SD Motor Vehicle Traffic Accident Summary

### JUST THE FACTS

☞ It is the short trips at low speeds that lead to the greatest number of crashes. About 75 percent of all crashes occur within 25 miles of home and on roads with maximum speed limit of 40 mph or less. (NHTSA)

☞ Youth drivers are three times more likely to be involved in fatal traffic crashes than all other drivers. (NHTSA)

- The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that the typical driver will have a near automobile crash one to two times per month and will be in a collision of some type on an average of every six years.

- Buckling up is a simple act that can have a dramatic effect on your life. Whether you're driving to school, work or down the street, remember to buckle up. It only takes 3 seconds and it can save your life. (NHTSA)

- Lap-shoulder belts reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat occupants by 45% and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50%. (NHTSA)

### Why are children more vulnerable in a crash?

☞ Children have larger heads that provide a high center of gravity.

☞ Children have soft skull bones.

☞ Children have rounded hip bones, which prevent the lap belt from staying low on the hips.

☞ Children have weak abdominal muscles.

☞ Cars are designed to protect the adult occupants.

Source: (NHTSA)

# Passenger Safety

## SD Law for Children 17 & Under

•As of July 1, 2001 all children in South Dakota ages 0-17 are required to buckle up in both the front and back of a motor vehicle. This new law expands the current law for children 0-4 to include children ages 5-17. The goal is to make sure that all South Dakota youth are buckled up while on our roadways.

•The driver is responsible for all people under the age of 18 within the vehicle. The driver can be pulled over and issued a ticket for not having children in a child safety seat or youth in a seat belt even without another traffic violation because it is a petty offense. (SD Law for Children 17 & Under)

## Seat Belts

Seat belts protect you best in a crash. They are designed so that the forces in a crash are absorbed by the strongest parts of your body- the bones of your hips, shoulders, and chest. (NHTSA)

## The Correct Way to Wear a Seat Belt

- The lap belt or lap portion of the lap/shoulder belt combination should be adjusted so it is low across the hips and pelvis, and never across the stomach.
- The shoulder belt should cross the chest and collarbone and be snug. The belt should never cross the front of the neck or face.

(NHTSA)

## Five Ways a Child Safety Seat Prevents Injury:

1. Spreads the forces on impact.
2. Harness displaces forces to the strongest parts of the child's body.
3. Allows the child to "ride down" the force of the crash.
4. Provides protection for the child's head, neck, and spinal column.
5. Keeps the child from colliding with the interior of the car or another passenger or being ejected.

(NHTSA)



## Child Passenger Safety

•Incorrect use of child safety seats is wide spread. Although 96 percent of parents believe they install their child safety seat correctly, it is estimated that approximately 82% of children who are placed in child safety seats are improperly restrained. (SKC)

• In SD, the Office of Highway Safety have found over 90% of child safety seats are misused.

Proper Child Safety Seat Use Chart			
	INFANTS	TODDLER	YOUNG CHILDREN
WEIGHT	Birth to 1 year (up to 20-22lbs.)	Over 1 year and over 20lbs.-40lbs.	Over 40lbs. up to 80lbs.
TYPE of SEAT	Infant only or rear-facing convertible	Convertible/Forward-facing	Belt positioning booster seat
SEAT POSITION	Rear-facing only	Forward-facing	Forward facing
LOCATION	Backseat	Backseat	Backseat

## Booster Seats

•All children between 40 to 80 pounds and less than 4'9" tall (approximately 4 to 8 years of age) should be using a booster seat.

•Children who cannot sit with their backs straight against the vehicle seat back cushion with their knees bent over the vehicle's seat edge without slouching should use a booster seat.

•If a booster seat is not used, the shoulder belt can cut across their necks, the lap belt can ride up onto their bellies, and some children can even slip out beneath the belts. (NHTSA)

## Special Need Child Passenger Safety Seats:

- A special needs seat can be obtained by submitting the following to the Office of Highway Safety (118 W. Capitol, Pierre, SD 57501, 773-4949

[www.state.sd.us/dps/hs/special.htm](http://www.state.sd.us/dps/hs/special.htm) )

1. Prescription from a doctor or physical therapist.
2. A letter giving the child's condition and medical complications. Include the child's age, height, weight, parents' name, address, and work/home phone number.

### For More Information Contact:

South Dakota Department of Health  
615 East 4th Street  
Pierre, SD 57501-1700  
Phone: 1-800-738-2301  
Fax: 605-773-5942  
<http://www.state.sd.us/doh/famhlth/datasheets.htm>